



248

DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN



Kudranski
McFARLANE



PREVIOUSLY IN SPAWN

Jim and Marc each race to the hospital, where Sara's life desperately hangs in the balance. After receiving an update on Sara's condition, Marc bumps into a haunting stranger, who may be more dangerous than he appears.

Upon speaking with Sara's doctor, Jim learns his intimacy with Sara was the cause of her condition. Very quickly, it becomes clear that Sara's doctor is no ordinary doctor, and Jim is forced to submit a sample of his blood to guarantee her safe recovery.

As Sara's "doctor" uses his strategy to manipulate Jim, Clown crafts his own with Hel, the demon who's taken over Susan's body. Jim infected Susan too, prior to her death, and Clown needs Hel to use this to her advantage.

Back at the hospital, everyone waits patiently for Sara to wake up...



Jim Downing (Spawn) – A man whose past is shrouded in mystery, and connected intimately to the very fabric of the Spawn mythos, Jim is the world's newest Hellspawn... and so much more. Having spent years in a deep coma, Jim's main drive is piecing together the fragments of the man he was, in an effort to discover the man he truly is.



Sara Johnston – When Jim woke from his coma (issue #185), Sara was the first person to greet him on the other side of the darkness. A woman of strong faith, Sara's connection to Jim will test her in ways she could never imagine.



Marc Rosen – A would-be reporter-turned-media manager and confidant of Jim Downing, Marc views Jim as his ticket to a better life – though the price for that success may be far greater than Marc knows.



Clown – A demon with close ties to the legacy of the Hellspawn, Clown's goal of controlling Jim Downing has continuously been jeopardized. But, ever the survivor, Clown seeks new avenues through which to manipulate his prize – Downing will not slip through his grasp so easily.



Susan Mathews – Susan is Marc Rosen's girlfriend and a woman with strong abandonment issues. After a tragic suicide, Susan's body now plays host to demon Hel, a spy of Clown's.

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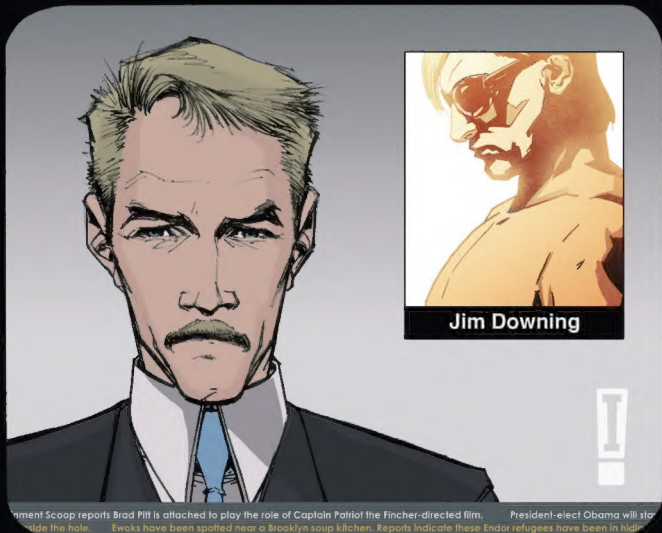
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SO FAR, HOSPITAL OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN UNWILLING TO SHARE ANY DETAILS OF MS. JOHNSTON'S CURRENT HEALTH CONDITIONS. SPECULATION HAS CONTINUED TO GROW THAT THE ISOLATION THEY HAVE PUT HER IN, MAY PERHAPS HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE RECENT EBOLA CRISIS THAT HAS MANY HOSPITAL WORKERS CONCERNED ABOUT ITS CONTAINMENT. SOME UNOFFICIAL SOURCES HAVE DENIED THOSE RUMORS AS "CATEGORICALLY FALSE", CLAIMING THAT MS. JOHNSTON IS INSTEAD SUFFERING FROM SOME SEVERE FORM OF SHOCK, THOUGH WE'VE BEEN UNABLE TO VERIFY ANY OF THOSE COMMENTS AS FACTUAL.

JIM DOWNING CONTINUES TO STAY AT HER BEDSIDE, WE PRESUME, SINCE THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTS OF HIM LEAVING THE HOSPITAL SINCE HE ARRIVED IN SUPPORT OF HIS FRIEND, WHO MANY ARE TOUTING AS A ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP. AFTER OUR UPCOMING BREAK, WE'LL SPEAK TO MEDICAL EXPERTS WHO WILL ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF WHETHER ANY OF US SHOULD BE CONCERNED THAT A SUPPOSED 'HEALER' LIKE MR. DOWNING HAS THUS FAR BEEN UNABLE TO CURE HER, LIKE HE HAS SO MANY OTHERS.



WITH SPECULATION ALREADY SURROUNDING DOWNING'S ACTUAL ABILITIES, THERE ARE SOME WHO WONDER WHAT IMPACT THIS CURRENT SITUATION WILL HAVE ON THE OPENING OF HIS *JOHN DOE FOUNDATION*, WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO OPEN EARLY NEXT YEAR. PROSPECTIVE PATIENTS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE HAVE BEEN INUNDATING THE FOUNDATION WITH REQUESTS FOR A PERSONAL MEETING WITH MR. DOWNING. HE WAS RECENTLY CLEARED BY A MEDICAL TEAM TO BE ABLE TO APPLY HIS MYSTERIOUS POWERS ON SOME OF THOSE IN DIRE MEDICAL NEED. THE GOVERNMENT HAS YET TO DECIDE IF THEY WILL PERMIT THE USE OR OPERATION OF ANY UNREGULATED MEDICAL PROCEDURES ON U.S. CITIZENS.

THE DEBATE SO FAR HAS BEEN WHETHER THE MERE TOUCHING OF A PERSON, EVEN WITH THE CLEAR INTENT OF PHYSICALLY HEALING THEM, IS CONSIDERED A TRUE MEDICAL ACTION. OR, IS IT MERELY SOME SPIRITUAL PROCESS THAT MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE PROFOUND RESULTS ON A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE. A SENATE HEARING HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR NEXT WEEK, THOUGH MR. DOWNING HAS NOT BEEN ASKED TO TESTIFY IN THIS FIRST ROUND OF QUESTIONING.

ALSO, CITY OFFICIALS QUIETLY RELEASED THEIR FINDINGS FROM LAST YEAR'S 'GREEN GLOW' * THAT APPEARED OVER THE CITY ONE EVENING LAST SEPTEMBER. THE REPORT STATES THAT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT ANY TERRORIST FACTIONS WERE INVOLVED.



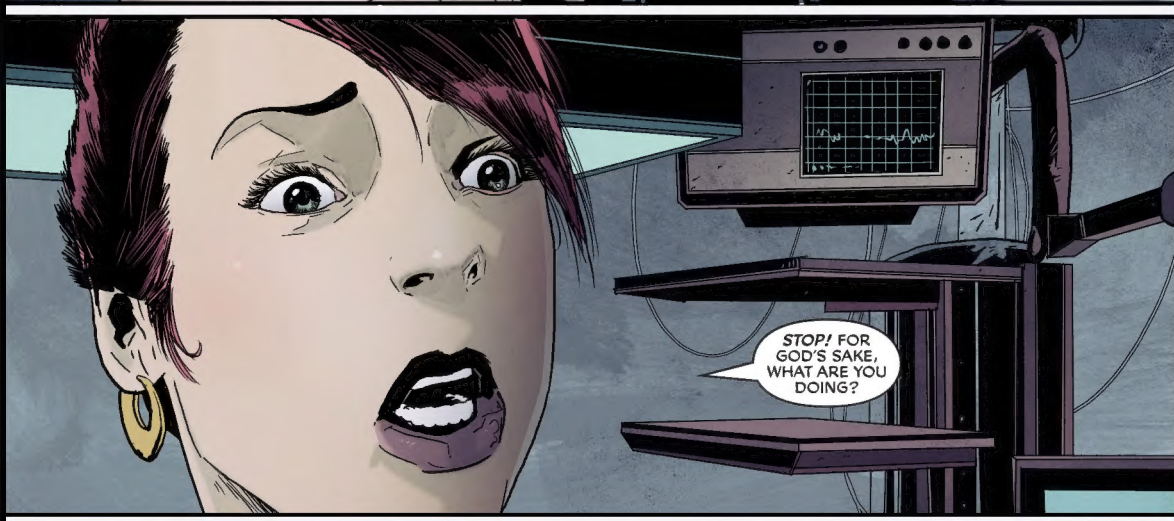
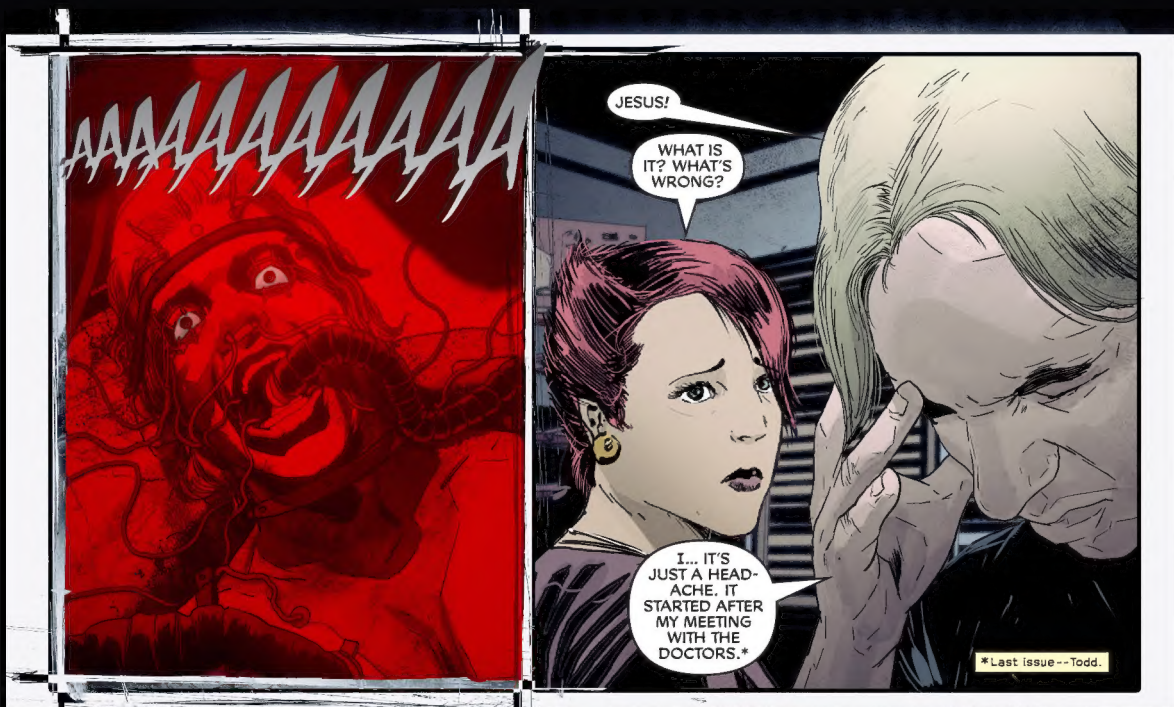
ALRIGHT, HERE WE GO AGAIN!

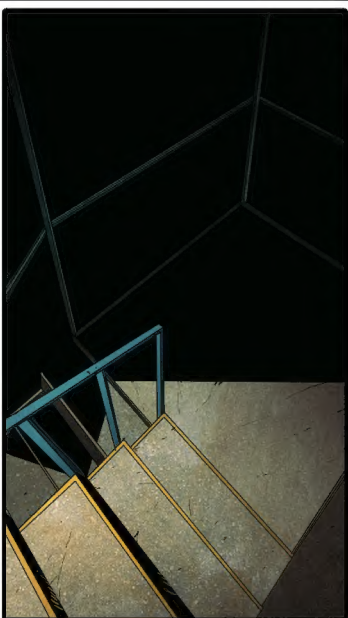
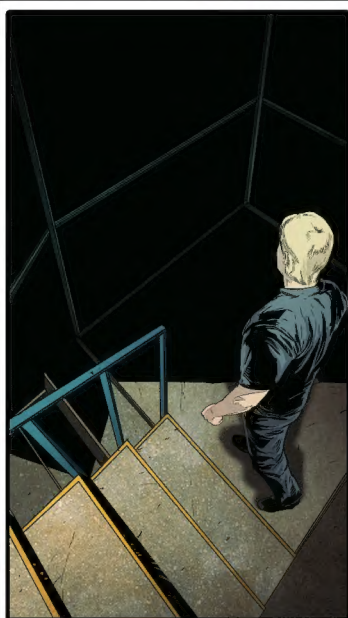
THE GOVERNMENT WANTS US TO BELIEVE THAT EVEN THOUGH THERE CONTINUES TO BE MORE AND MORE POTENTIAL CASES OF THE *EBOLA VIRUS* SPREADING ACROSS THIS COUNTRY...OF WHICH PRESIDENT OBAMA IS *CLUELESS* TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT, THIS LATEST INCIDENT INVOLVING CELEBRITY '*GOD MAN*', JIM DOWNING, AND HIS *SULTRY* GIRLFRIEND, HAVE NO CONNECTION TO EACH OTHER. I GUESS THEY THINK WE'RE EITHER *STUPID* OR ARE TOO SICK OURSELVES TO DO *ANYTHING ABOUT IT!!!*

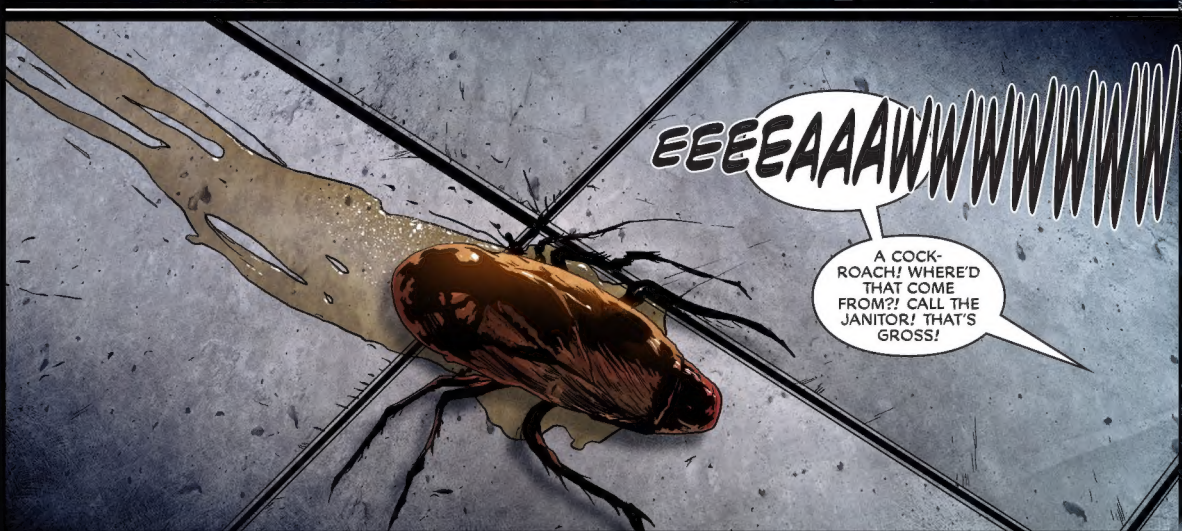
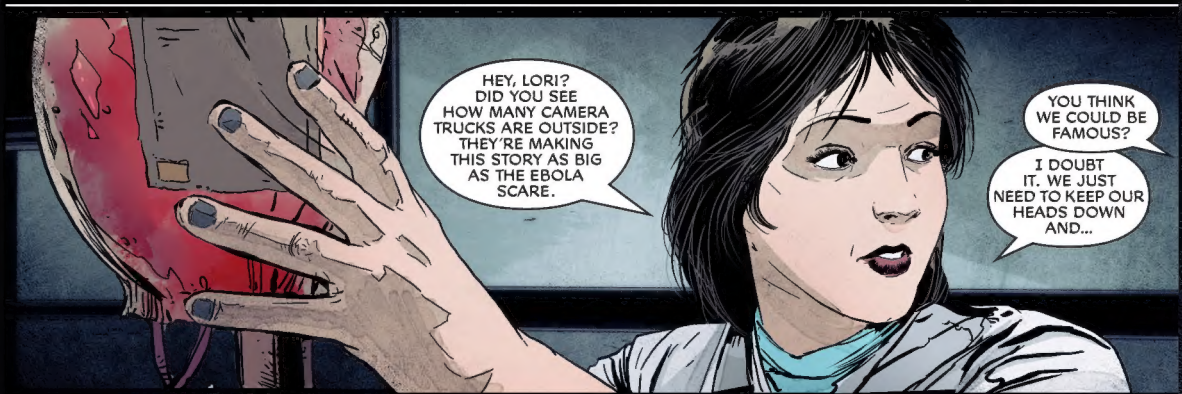
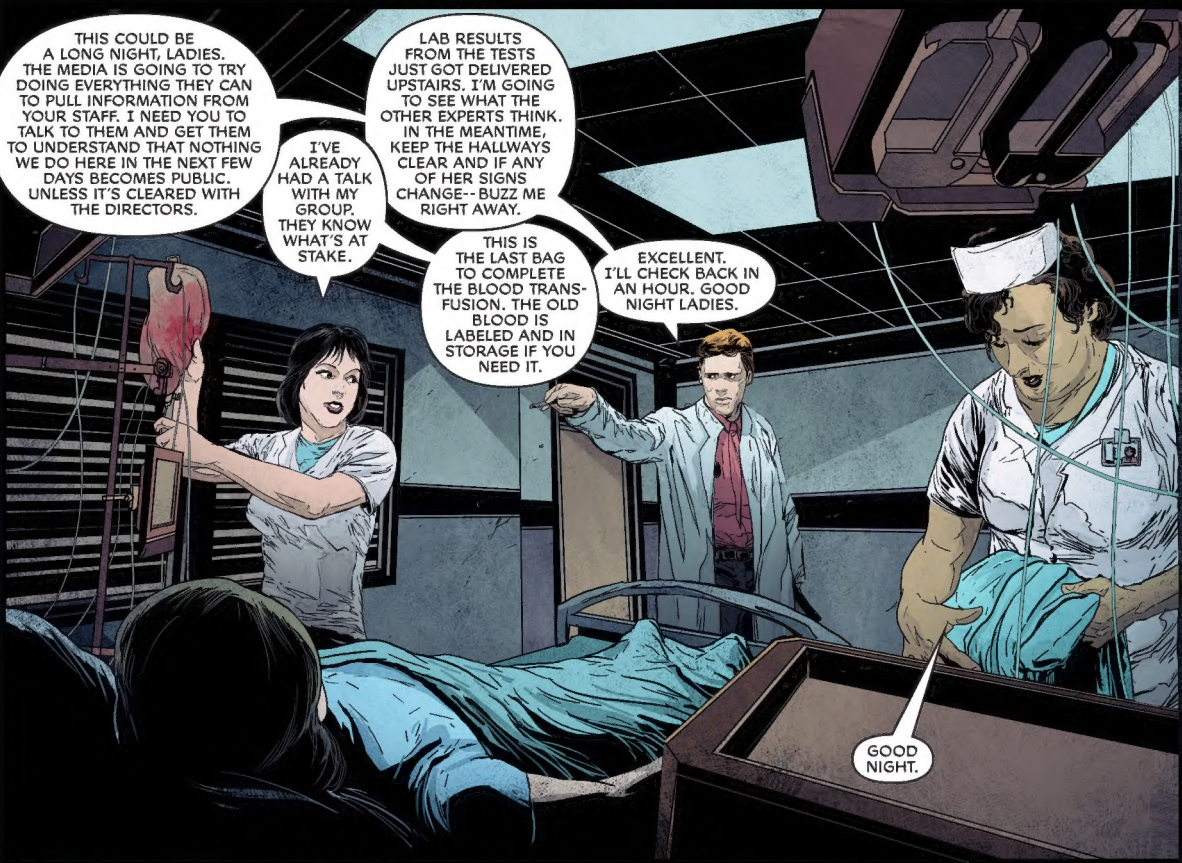
I'VE BEEN SCREAMING FOR DOWNING TO OFFER HIS '*SPECIAL POWERS*' TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO HELP ERADICATE EBOLA AND ANY OTHER *DISEASES* HE CAN! IF HE'S SUCH A WONDERFUL GUY WHO'S CAPABLE OF THESE *MAGICAL* CURING SESSIONS, THEN IN *GOD'S NAME* WHY ISN'T HE ALREADY ON THE GOVERNMENT PAYROLL!?!?

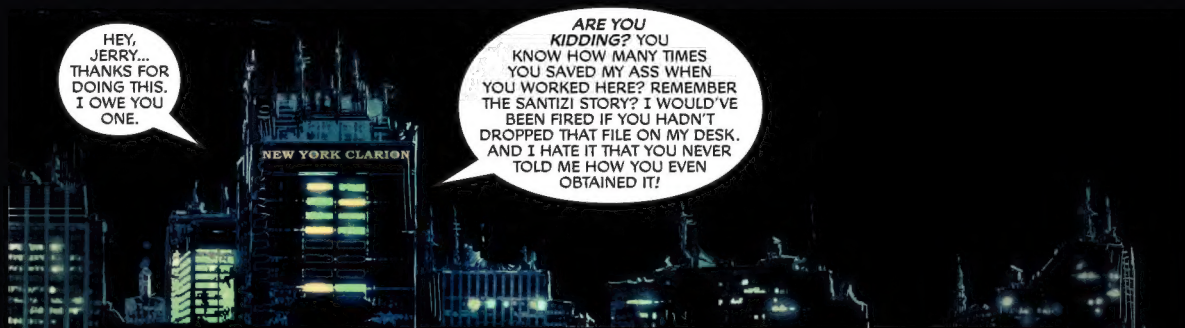
AND *DON'T TELL ME* IT'S BECAUSE THEY HAVEN'T ASKED HIM YET! THOUGH, THESE ARE THE SAME *QUACKS* THAT HAVE HAD A YEAR TRYING TO FIGURE OUT A *GIANT GREEN LIGHT* THAT *BLANKETED* THIS CITY LAST YEAR. A *GIANT* LIGHT COMES DOWN FROM THE SKIES AND *NO ONE KNOWS* WHAT IT WAS?!!!! ALL OF THIS INCOMPETENCE IS GETTING *EXHAUSTING* FOLKS. CANADA IS LOOKING *BETTER AND BETTER EACH DAY!!!*











HEY,
JERRY...
THANKS FOR
DOING THIS.
I OWE YOU
ONE.

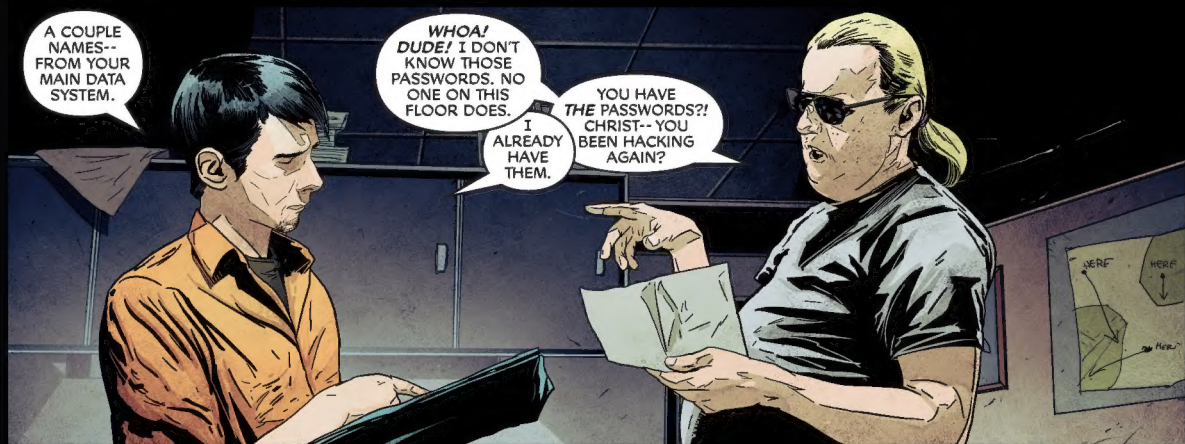
ARE YOU
KIDDING? YOU
KNOW HOW MANY TIMES
YOU SAVED MY ASS WHEN
YOU WORKED HERE? REMEMBER
THE SANTIZI STORY? I WOULD'VE
BEEN FIRED IF YOU HADN'T
DROPPED THAT FILE ON MY DESK.
AND I HATE IT THAT YOU NEVER
TOLD ME HOW YOU EVEN
OBTAINED IT!



I'VE GOT
MY SOURCES.
LET'S JUST LEAVE
IT AT THAT.

YOU
ALWAYS HAD
BETTER
SOURCES THAN
THE REST OF
US.

SO
WHAT'RE
YOU
LOOKING
FOR?



A COUPLE
NAMES--
FROM YOUR
MAIN DATA
SYSTEM.

WHOA!
DUDE! I DON'T
KNOW THOSE
PASSWORDS. NO
ONE ON THIS
FLOOR DOES.

I
ALREADY
HAVE
THEM.

YOU HAVE
THE PASSWORDS?!!
CHRIST-- YOU
BEEN HACKING
AGAIN?



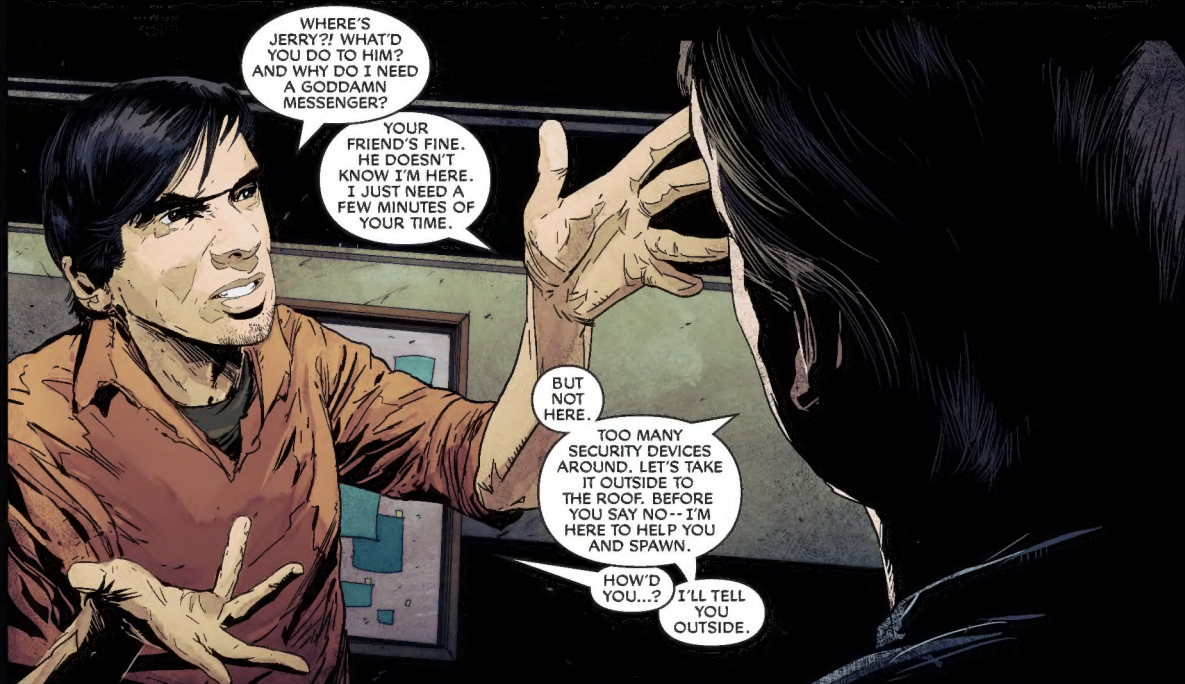
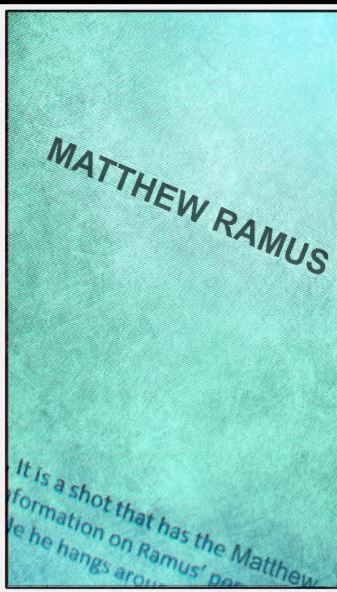
I DON'T
LIKE USING
THAT
TERM.

YOU ALWAYS
WERE A SICK
BASTARD... AND
WE LOVED YOU
FOR IT!

HEY! BEFORE
WE GET STARTED,
YOU NEED SOMETHING
TO DRINK? I'M GOING
GRAB SOMETHING
FROM THE LUNCH
ROOM.

MAYBE
A COKE.

YOU GOT
IT. BE RIGHT
BACK.





I DON'T PLAN ON SPENDING A LOT OF TIME EXPLAINING THINGS. I JUST NEED YOU TO ACCEPT WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SAY. IT'S MORE EFFICIENT THAT WAY.

YOU'RE IN DANGER. WE ALL ARE.



IF WHAT I THINK IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN DOES, THE CONSEQUENCES WILL BE DRASTIC AND FAR REACHING.

OKAY, THAT'S KIND OF DRAMATIC, BUT YOU'VE GOT MY ATTENTION. WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT SPECIFICALLY? HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT JIM AND SPAWN?

AND...

WHY DO YOU SEEM... FAMILIAR?



MY NAME'S DANIEL KILGORE. I TRIED SPEAKING WITH YOU AT THE HOSPITAL-- YOU WERE OBVIOUSLY DISTRACTED. BUT WHAT MATTERS NOW IS MAKING SURE SPAWN WINS HIS NEXT BATTLE.



IT'S HIS FINAL TEST!

DO ME A FAVOR-- STOP TALKING IN METAPHORS AND TELL ME WHAT YOU'VE GOT TO DO WITH JIM.

I DIDN'T SAY JIM!

I SAID SPAWN!

THERE'S A DIFFERENCE!



SPAWN HAS BEEN HERE FOR CENTURIES-- THE CURSE JUST KEEPS GETTING PASSED ON. BUT THE ONE WHO WORE THE COSTUME BEFORE JIM, HE'S THE ONE I'M TALKING ABOUT. BECAUSE IF HE MEETS HIS LAST TWO CHALLENGES... EVERYONE WILL FEAR HIM!



AND JUST WHERE IS THIS 'PRIOR' SPAWN?

I DON'T KNOW. BUT HE ISN'T DEAD. THAT I KNOW. AT LEAST NOT IN THE METAPHYSICAL SENSE. HE DISAPPEARED AND NO ONE KNOWS WHERE OR WHY. HE JUST WASN'T THERE ONE DAY.

AND JIM JUST PICKED UP THOSE POWERS?



NO! HE WAS CHOSEN! SIMMONS WOULDN'T HAVE LEFT THAT TO CHANCE. SO FOR WHATEVER REASON YOUR FRIEND, JIM DOWNING, WAS PICKED FOR A SPECIFIC PURPOSE.

I THINK SIMMONS KNEW THAT JIM, BEING HUMAN INSTEAD OF REANIMATED, WOULD CONFUSE THOSE WHO HAD BEEN HUNTING THE SPAWN.

FOR WHAT PURPOSE?



BECAUSE HE, LIKE MYSELF, IS AT WAR WITH EVIL! FOR SPAWNS, IT'S THEIR COSTUMES THAT CONTROL IT. YOU WIELD MORE POWER THAN ANYONE IN EXISTENCE.



BUT, IF THE
COSTUME GETS THE
UPPER HAND, THEN GOD
SAVE US ALL! AND RIGHT
NOW YOUR FRIEND,
JIM, IS LOSING THAT
BATTLE!

ALL THOSE PEOPLE
HE THINKS HE'S CURED--
IT'S A CON! THOSE PEOPLE MAY
BE HEALTHY NOW, BUT IT WON'T LAST.
THE COSTUME SPREAD ITSELF INTO
EVERY ONE OF THOSE THAT DOWNING
TOUCHED. LIKE SPREADING GERMS
FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER.
EXCEPT, INSTEAD OF GERMS, IT'S
A 'BLACK CANCER.' THEY'VE
BEEN INFECTED-- AND
SO HAVE YOU.

I
DON'T
BELIEVE
YOU.



SO DON'T
HELP ME. THAT'S
FINE! AT LEAST BE
SMART ENOUGH
TO HELP YOUR-
SELF!

BY
DOING
WHAT?

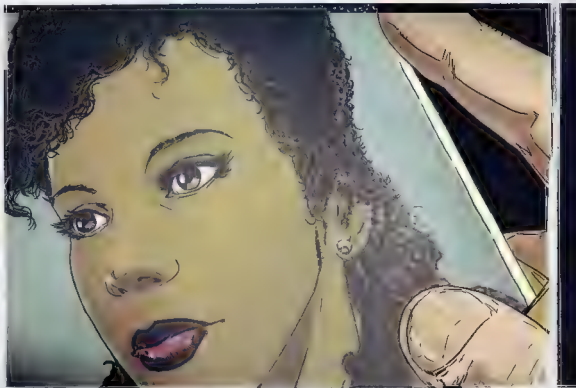


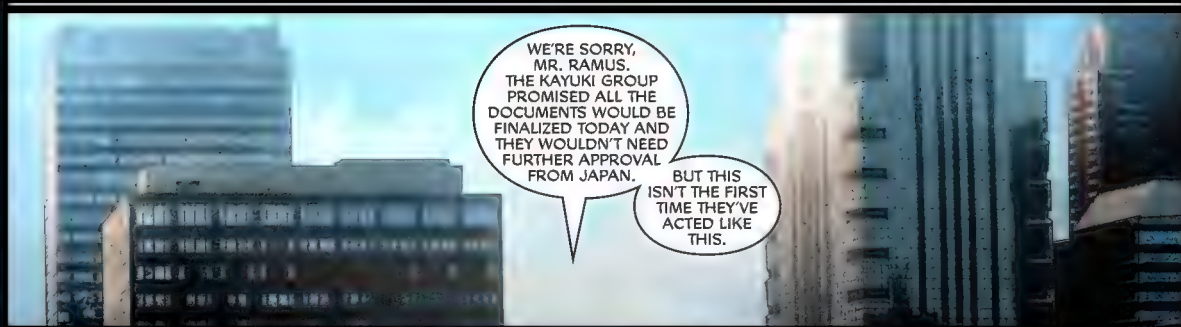
BY USING
KNOWLEDGE!



HERE...
INSIDE THIS IS
SOMEONE THAT
CAN GIVE YOU
ANSWERS.

HER NAME
IS WANDA
BLAKE.





WE'RE SORRY, MR. RAMUS. THE KAYUKI GROUP PROMISED ALL THE DOCUMENTS WOULD BE FINALIZED TODAY AND THEY WOULDN'T NEED FURTHER APPROVAL FROM JAPAN.

BUT THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME THEY'VE ACTED LIKE THIS.



THAT'S NOT IT. SOMETHING WAS DIFFERENT TODAY. THEY SEEMED SMUG, LIKE THEY WEREN'T AFRAID. EVEN MR. KAYUKI'S SON, WHO'S USUALLY QUITE RESERVED, SEEMED OVER CONFIDENT. I DON'T LIKE IT WHEN I DON'T KNOW WHY MY ENEMIES ARE HAPPY, OR WHY THEIR BEHAVIOR SEEMS ODD.

YOU HEARD THEM, SIR. THEY KNEW OUR URANIUM SUPPLY WAS LOW. SOMEONE LEAKED THAT INFO FROM OUR SIDE. SO THEY WERE ABLE TO CALL YOUR BLUFF.



NO.

IT'S MORE THAN THAT. SOMETHING DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT.

YOUR LIMO IS WAITING, SIR.

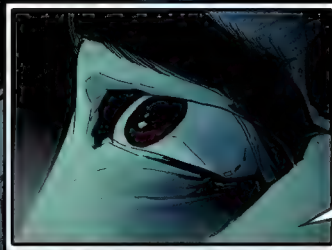


Minutes Later.

WHEN WE GET BACK TO THE OFFICE, I WANT YOU TO CHECK WITH BANGKOK AND HONG KONG. SEE WHAT THEY'RE HEARING FROM OUR OTHER ACCOUNTS. IF SOMETHING IS TRULY IN THE AIR I WANT TO KNOW ABOUT IT.

WHAT'S THE UPDATE ON DOWNING? IS HE STILL AT THE HOSPITAL?

THUD



YOU HEAR THAT?



SHIT...!



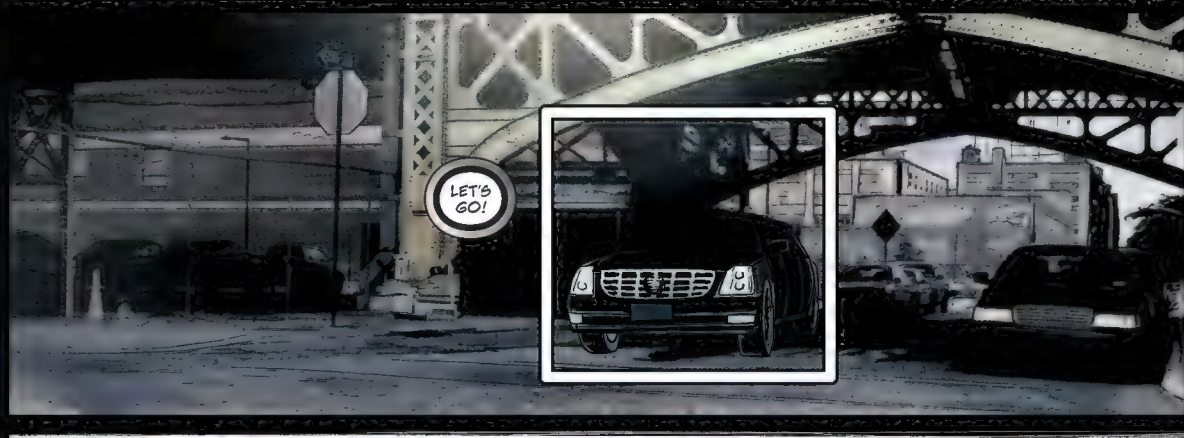
**BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM**

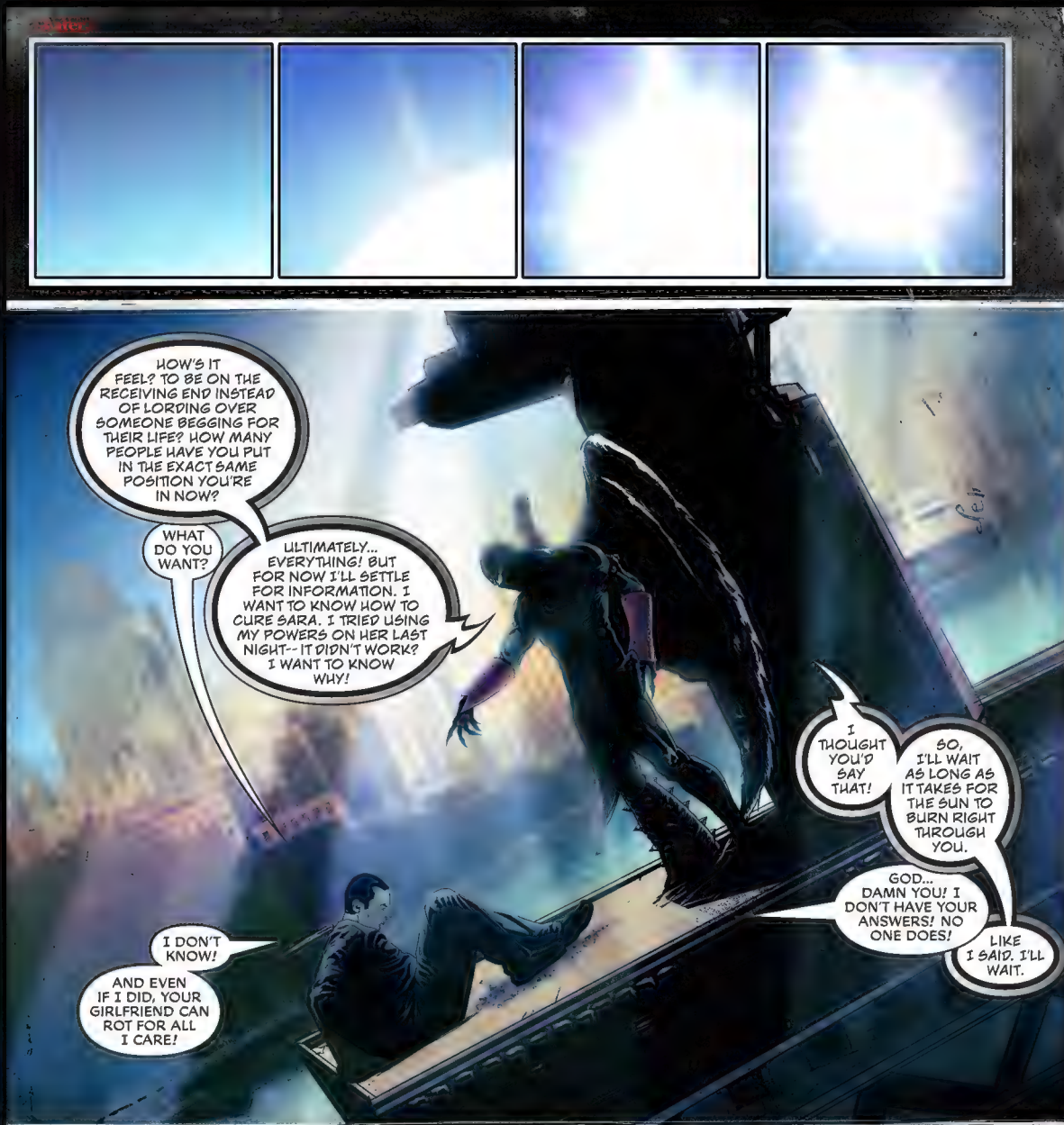


THE SUN
HURTS,
DOESN'T
IT?



GOOD!





HOW'S IT
FEEL? TO BE ON THE
RECEIVING END INSTEAD
OF LORDING OVER
SOMEONE BEGGING FOR
THEIR LIFE? HOW MANY
PEOPLE HAVE YOU PUT
IN THE EXACT SAME
POSITION YOU'RE
IN NOW?

WHAT
DO YOU
WANT?

ULTIMATELY...
EVERYTHING! BUT
FOR NOW I'LL SETTLE
FOR INFORMATION. I
WANT TO KNOW HOW TO
CURE SARA. I TRIED USING
MY POWERS ON HER LAST
NIGHT--IT DIDN'T WORK?
I WANT TO KNOW
WHY!

I DON'T
KNOW!

AND EVEN
IF I DID, YOUR
GIRLFRIEND CAN
ROT FOR ALL
I CARE!

I
THOUGHT
YOU'D
SAY
THAT!

SO,
I'LL WAIT
AS LONG AS
IT TAKES FOR
THE SUN TO
BURN RIGHT
THROUGH
YOU.

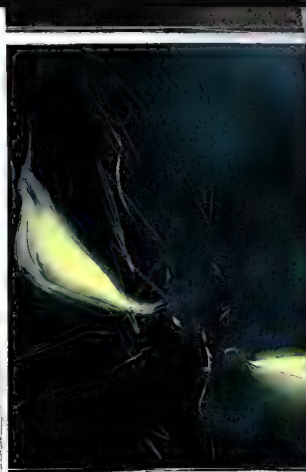
GOD...
DAMN YOU! I
DON'T HAVE YOUR
ANSWERS! NO
ONE DOES!

LIKE
I SAID, I'LL
WAIT.

YOUR
COSTUME!
IT POISONED HER!!
NOT ME!

I KNOW, THAT'S
WHY I NEED TO TALK TO IT.
YOU'RE NOT HERE BECAUSE I
THOUGHT YOU COULD TELL ME
ANYTHING--YOU'RE HERE SO
I CAN **USE** YOU!

THE ONLY WAY
FOR ME TO SPEAK
WITH MY COSTUME IS TO
GIVE IT A 'HOST' IT WON'T
KILL. I'M HOPING THAT'S YOU
BECAUSE SINCE WE'VE BOTH
BEEN TO HELL, THE COSTUME
SHOULDN'T MIND TAKING
OVER YOUR BODY A
SHORT WHILE.



THOUGH
I CAN'T
GUARANTEE IT
WON'T BE
INCREDIBLY
PAINFUL.



HOW DO
YOU KNOW
THIS'LL
WORK?!

**I
DON'T!**



BUT LIKE
YOU SAID
ABOUT
SARA...



I DON'T
CARE WHAT
HAPPENS TO
YOU!



AND IF YOU
DON'T MAKE IT,
DON'T WORRY.
THERE'S PLENTY OF
OTHER VAMPIRES
THAT COULD TAKE
YOUR PLACE.



YOU
DON'T NEED
TO LOOK
HARD TO FIND
ONE.



YOU'RE NOT
ONE OF US!
YOU'RE A HALF-
BREED! A
NOTHING!

I'D SAVE
MY BREATH IF
I WERE YOU. YOU
MAY NEED IT IN
A COUPLE OF
SECONDS.



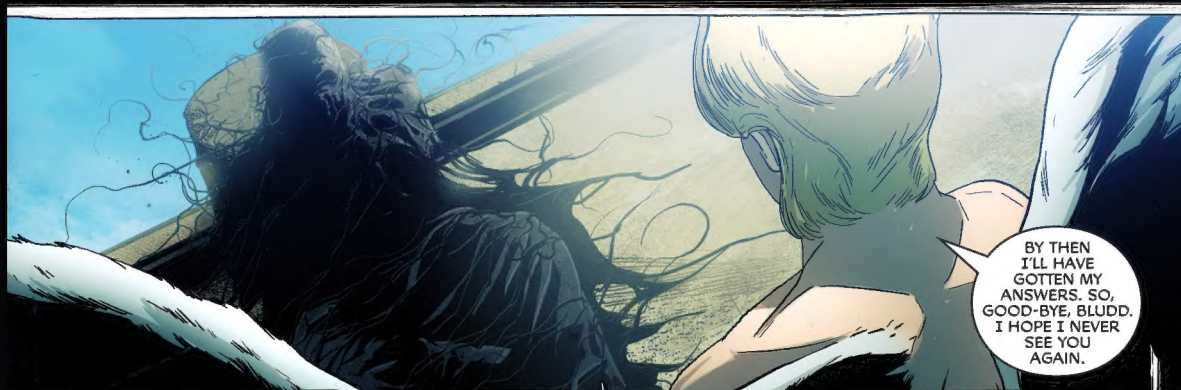
IDIOT!

IT'LL EAT
US BOTH
ALIVE!



NO IT WON'T.
BECAUSE IT'LL
BE WEAK ONCE
IT TRANSFERS
TO YOU.

SEE THAT
PIPE YOU'RE TIED
TO-- IT'S FILLED WITH
DIRT FROM THE 'DEAD
ZONE.' THAT'LL SAP
ITS POWERS FOR
AWHILE.



BY THEN
I'LL HAVE
GOTTEN MY
ANSWERS. SO,
GOOD-BYE, BLUDD.
I HOPE I NEVER
SEE YOU
AGAIN.



YARRRRRGGGGHHH





THAT'S IT,
SYMBIOTE,
FIGHT IT!

FIGHT ALL
YOU WANT,
IT WON'T
MATTER!

DOWNING...
I'LL KILL
YOU!

THEN YOU'LL
DIE TOO! BECAUSE
WE'RE STILL ATTACHED.
WE CAN'T SEPARATE
COMPLETELY FROM EACH
OTHER. SO POUR YOUR
EVIL OUT AS MUCH AS
YOU WANT. BECAUSE
TODAY...

I
OWN
YOU!





Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE